



Prophetic Hadith and the Spectrum of Night Devotion: Reconstructing Qiyām al-Lail in Contemporary Context

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Abstract: The concept of qiyām al-lail in Islamic tradition is often narrowly interpreted as night prayers such as tahajjud or witir. However, numerous Prophetic traditions indicate that nighttime devotion includes not only prayer but also spiritually significant acts like remembrance (dhikr), Qur’anic recitation, consultation, education, and social service. This study aims to reinterpret the meaning of qiyām al-lail in the Prophet’s ḥadīths through a ma’ānī al-ḥadīth approach that emphasizes textual, intertextual, and contextual analysis. The method employed is qualitative library research with takhrīj al-ḥadīth and critical analysis of the chains of transmission (isnād) and content (matn) of ḥadīths found in the kutub al-tis’ah. The results show that the examined ḥadīths are authentic, free from ‘illah or shudhūdh, and provide a robust basis for reinterpretation. Through a meaning-based lens, qiyām al-lail encompasses not only ritual practices like prayer but also other nightly acts of devotion intended for seeking nearness to Allah. This reinterpretation affirms that spiritual excellence at night can manifest in various forms of contextualized religious and social engagement. Thus, this study expands the understanding of nighttime worship and brings the prophetic tradition closer to the lived realities of contemporary Muslims.

Keywords: *Hadith Of the Prophet; Interpretation; Ma’ānī Al-Ḥadīth; Night Worship; Qiyam Al-Lail*

Abstrak: Makna qiyām al-lail dalam tradisi keislaman selama ini lebih sering dipahami secara sempit sebagai salat malam, seperti tahajjud atau witir. Padahal, berbagai hadis Nabi Saw. menunjukkan bahwa ibadah malam tidak terbatas pada salat, tetapi juga mencakup aktivitas lain yang memiliki dimensi spiritual, seperti zikir, membaca al-Qur’an, musyawarah, pengajaran, dan pelayanan sosial. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mereinterpretasi makna qiyām al-lail dalam hadis Nabi Saw. dengan menggunakan pendekatan ma’ānī al-ḥadīth yang berorientasi pada eksplorasi makna secara tekstual, intertekstual, dan kontekstual. Metode yang digunakan adalah penelitian kualitatif berbasis studi pustaka (library research) dengan teknik takhrīj al-ḥadīth serta kritik sanad dan matan terhadap hadis-hadis dalam kutub al-tis’ah. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa seluruh hadis yang dikaji memiliki sanad yang sahih dan matan yang valid tanpa ditemukan adanya ‘illah maupun shudhūdh. Berdasarkan

pendekatan maknawi, ditemukan bahwa *qiyām al-lail* tidak hanya bermakna ibadah ritual seperti salat malam, tetapi juga aktivitas malam lainnya yang diniatkan sebagai penghambaan kepada Allah Swt. Reinterpretasi ini menegaskan bahwa kesalehan malam hari dapat diwujudkan dalam berbagai bentuk pengabdian spiritual dan sosial yang kontekstual. Dengan demikian, pemaknaan ulang ini tidak hanya memperluas horizon ibadah malam, tetapi juga merelevansikan ajaran hadis dalam kehidupan umat Islam modern yang dinamis dan beragam.

Kata Kunci: hadis Nabi; ibadah malam; *ma'ānī al-ḥadīth*; *qiyām al-lail*; reinterpretasi

1. Introduction

In this modern era marked by rapid technological advancement and massive social change, Muslims face challenges in maintaining spiritual closeness to Allah SWT. One aspect of worship that is often neglected in contemporary daily life is the management and utilisation of time, especially at night (Fikriyah, 2024). In fact, Islam as a universal religion has paid great attention to the importance of time in human life, as emphasised in QS. al-'Ashr (103): 1-3 and various hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Among these forms of attention is the recommendation to enliven the night through worship known as *qiyām al-lail* (Yaakub, Othman, & M. Bakir, 2025).

The current phenomenon among Muslim communities shows that understanding of *qiyām al-lail* is often limited to the practice of night prayers alone, such as *tahajud*, *witir*, or *istikharah*. The activity of *qiyām al-lail* seems to be defined solely within the framework of formal rituals, while other aspects of nightly worship, such as reading the Qur'an, reciting *dzikir*, seeking knowledge, engaging in religious discussions, and contemplation, are often excluded from this interpretation (Ida Ilhafah & Fairuzah, 2022).

This indicates a narrowing of the meaning of the concept of *qiyām al-lail*, which in the hadith and the tradition of the Companions encompasses a broader and more flexible range of worship activities, if they are performed at night with the intention of drawing closer to Allah SWT. This condition reflects a gap in religious understanding between the text and context, between the teachings contained in the Sunnah of the Prophet and the understanding of Muslims today.

In fact, many accounts mention that the Prophet Muhammad did not only spend his nights praying but also engaged in other activities such as consulting with his companions, imparting knowledge, and evaluating *da'wah* strategies (Ramle & Huda, 2022). For example, a hadith from *Musnad Imam Ahmad* mentions that the Prophet Muhammad spent the night with Abu Bakr and Umar discussing matters concerning the *ummah* until late at night. This confirms that *qiyām al-lail* is not a rigid activity, but rather open to various forms of devotion to Allah, both in ritual and social worship.

In the context of Indonesia as a Muslim-majority country, observations show that *qiyām al-lail* is more commonly practised in the form of congregational *tahajud*

prayers, whether in Islamic boarding schools, mosques, or other religious activities (Monaziroh & Hasanah, 2021). While the broader forms of *qiyām al-lail*, such as *halaqah ilmu* (knowledge circles), evening hadith studies, or even *tafakur* (contemplation) and introspection, are rarely labelled as part of *qiyām al-lail*. This indicates a need for reinterpretation of the meaning of *qiyām al-lail* to align with the spirit of the hadith, rather than being confined to a formal *fiqh*-based understanding of worship (Ida Ilhafah & Fairuzah, 2022).

On the other hand, empirical data from field observations show a new pattern of religious engagement among young Muslims, where evening activities are often dominated by worldly activities—such as entertainment, work, or aimless digital interactions (Hakim, 2022). In some communities, night is even perceived as less sacred than the day. This reflects a disparity between the spiritual meaning of night in Islamic teachings and how some modern Muslims use that time (Ubabuddin, 2020).

This is where the need arises to rediscover the meaning of *qiyām al-lail* as described in the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad—not only as an exclusive form of worship but as an inclusive and contextual spiritual practice.

Previous studies on *qiyām al-lail* have generally focused on the virtues of *tahajjud* prayer, the health benefits of waking up at night, or spiritual motivation in night prayer (N. Khotimah, Muhammad Zaki Akhbar Hasan, & Alam Tarlam, 2024; Kusumawinakhyu, 2023; Wahyudin, 2024). For example, the book *Mukjizat Shalat Tahajjud* by Yusuf Khatthar Muhammad explores the spiritual peace of night prayers (Yusuf Khattar Muhammad, 2009), while Sholeh's work *Tahajjud and Mental Health* emphasises the psychological and medical benefits of *tahajjud* (Susanti, 2023). Several theses and dissertations also discuss the technicalities and spiritual wisdom of *tahajjud*.

However, there is a notable gap in research that specifically and deeply explores *qiyām al-lail* from the hadith perspective as a holistic concept of night worship encompassing more than just prayer. This opens academic space for expanding the discourse on the meaning of *qiyām al-lail*.

The urgency of this research is heightened by the tendency among some Muslims to practise rituals without depth. Religious observance often focuses on form rather than spiritual meaning. In this context, *qiyām al-lail*—as a symbol of spiritual life at night—needs to be transformed from an exclusive ritual into an inclusive spiritual practice. This includes both *maḥḍah* (ritual) and *ghair maḥḍah* (non-ritual) worship that brings Islamic values into everyday life (Ida Ilhafah & Fairuzah, 2022). For instance, a student studying hadith late into the night with the intention of worship, or a teacher preparing religious materials sincerely at night, may both be classified as engaging in *qiyām al-lail* in a broader sense.

Based on this urgency, the present study was conducted to build a renewed understanding of the concept of *qiyām al-lail* in the Prophet's hadith. The study emphasises that night worship is not limited to prayer but includes various forms of devotion that are spiritually meaningful and contextually relevant.

To achieve this aim, the research uses a qualitative method based on library research, focusing on the examination of hadiths that explicitly or implicitly discuss night-time religious activities under the framework of *qiyām al-lail*. Primary data were sourced from the *kutub al-tisʿah* (the nine canonical hadith collections), including *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, and *Musnad Aḥmad*. These hadiths were systematically analysed using the method of *takhrīj al-ḥadīth* to trace their origins, assess the validity of their *sanad* (chains of transmission), and verify the integrity of their *matan* (content).

In addition, hadith criticism was conducted from both the *sanad* and *matan* perspectives to ensure the authenticity and quality of the hadiths used in the reinterpretation process. The critiqued hadiths were then analysed using the *maʿānī al-ḥadīth* approach, focusing on the meaning, structure, and context to allow for more dynamic and relevant interpretations in contemporary settings.

The analytical framework incorporates several approaches: a theological-normative approach to understand the faith dimension of night worship; a historical approach to reconstruct the practice of *qiyām al-lail* during the time of the Prophet and his Companions; and sociological and anthropological approaches to interpret how Muslim societies today understand and practice night worship. A linguistic approach is also applied to explore the etymological and semantic nuances of the terms *qiyām*, *lail*, and their equivalents in hadith.

All these approaches are synthesized in an intertextual and contextual interpretative framework, where relevant hadiths are cross-examined and contextualised with the spiritual realities of contemporary Muslims—especially urban youth facing challenges in maintaining religious discipline during the night. Thus, this methodology treats hadith not merely as static text, but as a living discourse that continues to evolve, requiring critical, contextual, and spiritually responsive readings.

2. Results and Discussion

Karakteristik dan Kualitas Hadis Qiyām al-Lail

Metode Takhrīj dan Eksplorasi Hadis

This study uses *takhrīj al-ḥadīth* to trace and identify hadiths related to *qiyām al-lail*. The exploration process began with the grouping of themes such as “*ṣalāt al-lail*”, “*tahajjud*”, “*witir*”, “*tilāwah al-Qurʾān*”, “*zikir malam*”, and other forms of worship performed at night. The researcher used two methods in tracing these hadiths, namely: 1. The method of one of the hadith phrases using the book *al-Muʿjam al-Mufahras li Alfāẓ al-Ḥadīth*, and 2. Using the method of the initial text of the hadith using the book *Mawsūʿah al-Aṭrāf*, and *Faṭḥ al-Kabīr fi Ḍamm al-Ziyādah ilā al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaḡhīr*.

The hadiths found scattered throughout various major books *kutub al-tis'ah* such as Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Sunan Abī Dāwūd, Sunan al-Tirmidhī, Sunan al-Nasā'ī, Sunan Ibn Mājah, and Musnad Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal. From this exploration, the hadith *qiyām al-lail* is classified into five main themes: (1) Hadith about tahajud prayer, (2) Hadith about witr prayer, (3) Hadith about tarawih prayer, (4) Hadith about zikr, and (5) Hadith about reading the Qur'an.

This search is not merely thematic, but also based on a search of key words in the wording of the hadith. In this context, two approaches are used simultaneously: first, the method of identifying hadith based on one of the key words using *al-Mu'jam al-Mufahras li Alfāz al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawī*; and second, the method of initial tracing of the matn of the hadith through Mawsū'ah al-Aṭrāf and Fath al-Kabīr. After the hadith data has been collected, i'tibār al-sanad is carried out to assess the strength of the sanad and identify the presence of *mutābi'* or *syāhid*. This is followed by a critique of the sanad and matn, both textually and contextually.

Takhrīj al Hadis

1) Hadith about Tahajud prayer

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «أَفْضَلُ الصِّيَامِ، بَعْدَ رَمَضَانَ، شَهْرُ اللَّهِ الْمُحَرَّمُ، وَأَفْضَلُ الصَّلَاةِ، بَعْدَ الْفَرِيضَةِ، صَلَاةُ اللَّيْلِ.

Based on the collection of hadiths found in the source book, the researcher found 12 chains of transmission, namely: 2 accounts in the book Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, 1 account in the book Sunan Abī Dāwūd, 1 narration in the book Sunan al-Tirmidhī, 2 narrations in the book Sunan al-Nasā'ī, 1 narration in the book Sunan al-Dārimī, and 5 narrations in the book Musnad Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal. These narrations were only transmitted from one companion, namely Abū Hurayrah, which indicates that the hadith does not have any *syāhid*. Similarly, among the *tābi'in*, only Ḥumayd bin 'Abd al-Raḥmān received the hadith from Abū Hurayrah..

2) Hadith about Witr Prayer

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: « صَلَاةُ اللَّيْلِ مَثْنَى مَثْنَى، فَإِذَا خَشِيَ أَحَدُكُمْ الصُّبْحَ..

Based on the collection of hadiths related to the research subject found in primary source books, the researcher found a total of 29 chains of transmission, consisting of: 1 hadith in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, 3 hadiths in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, 1 hadith in Sunan Abī Dāwūd, 2 narrations in Sunan al-Nasā'ī, 1 narration in Sunan al-Dārimī, and 21 narrations in Musnad Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal. All of these narrations are sourced from a single Companion, 'Abd Allāh bin 'Umar, which indicates that this hadith has no corroborating narrations from other Companions. Meanwhile, among the *tābi'in*, there

were many narrators involved in the chain of transmission of this hadith, each of whom had the status of *mutābi*.

3) Hadith about Tarawih Prayer

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ «قَدْ رَأَيْتُ الَّذِي صَنَعْتُمْ، فَلَمْ يَمْنَعْنِي مِنَ الْخُرُوجِ إِلَيْكُمْ إِلَّا أَنِّي خَشِيتُ أَنْ تُفْرَضَ عَلَيْكُمْ

Based on the collection of hadiths related to the research subject found in authoritative source books, the researcher found a total of 11 chains of transmission, consisting of: 3 hadiths in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, 2 hadiths in Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, 1 hadith in Sunan Abī Dāwūd, 1 narration in Sunan al-Nasāʾī, and 4 narrations in Musnad Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal. All of these narrations come from a single companion, ʿĀʾisyah ra., one of the wives of the Prophet Muhammad, which also indicates that the hadith about tarawih prayer has no *syāhid* from other companions. Similarly, among the *tābiʿīn*, the chain of transmission originates from a single individual, namely ʿUrwah bin al-Zubayr, who received the hadith directly from ʿĀʾisyah ra..

4) Hadith Dzikir

عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: “مَنْ تَعَارَّ مِنَ اللَّيْلِ، فَقَالَ: لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ

Based on the collection of hadiths that were the subject of this study and traced through primary source books, the researcher found a total of six chains of transmission. The details are as follows: one account in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, 1 narration in Sunan al-Tirmidhī, 1 narration in Sunan Ibn Mājah, 1 narration in Sunan al-Dārimī, 1 narration in Sunan Abī Dāwūd, and 1 narration in Musnad Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal. All of these narrations are sourced from a single companion, ʿUbādah bin al-Ṣāmit, which indicates that this hadith about dhikr has no *syāhid* from other companions. Similarly, at the level of the *tābiʿīn*, the narration was only performed by one narrator, namely Junādah bin Abī Umayyah, who narrated the hadith directly from ʿUbādah bin al-Ṣāmit.

5) Hadith about reading the Qur'an

قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: «مَنْ قَرَأَ بِمِائَةِ آيَةٍ فِي لَيْلَةٍ، كُتِبَ لَهُ قُنُوتُ لَيْلَةٍ

Based on the collection of hadiths that were the subject of this study and have been traced in the primary sources, the researcher found a total of 8 chains of transmission, consisting of: 7 narrations in Sunan al-Dārimī and 1 narration in Musnad Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal. Of all these narrations, some appear to be *marfūʿ* (attributed to the Prophet Muhammad), namely 3 narrations originating from Abū al-Dardāʾ and

Tamīm bin Aws al-Dārī. The other 5 narrations are mawqūf (attributed only to the Companions), originating from Ibn ‘Umar, Abū Umāmah, Ka’ab, Fuḍālah, and Tamīm bin Aws. Thus, the hadith about reading the Qur'an at night has *syāhid* that strengthens its meaning. Meanwhile, Umm al-Dardā and Kathīr bin Murrah are recorded as *mutābi*, who play a role in strengthening the chain of transmission at the *tābiin* level.

The Quality of the Hadith on Qiyam Al-Lail

After exploring and *takhrīj al-ḥadīth* on the hadiths about *qiyām al-lail*—through the process of collection, *i‘tibār al-sanad*, and mapping the chains of transmission—the researcher proceeds to analyse the authenticity of these hadiths. This stage is carried out through sanad criticism (*naqd al-sanad*) and matn criticism (*naqd al-matn*) to distinguish between authentic, weak, or problematic narrations, thereby avoiding errors in interpreting the meaning of the hadith (Nuraini, 2024).

1) Quality Sanad

The majority of hadiths about *qiyām al-lail* were compiled from the books Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim. Both books have been recognised by the majority of scholars as the most authoritative works of hadith after the Qur'an. Later scholars such as Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, al-Nawawī, Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, and al-Suyūṭī adopted the methodology of these two imams as the basis for formulating the principles of authentic hadith. (Samsukadi, 2020) The difference between al-Bukhārī and Muslim lies only in the conditions for the meeting between narrators: al-Bukhārī requires a direct meeting (*liqāʿ*), while Muslim requires only *mu‘āṣarah* (contemporaneity). (Mohd Zin, Zakaria Yama, & Mohd Ramli, 2023) However, the authenticity of the hadith in both books is still recognised by *ijma*.

Based on this legitimacy, the researcher considers it unnecessary to criticise the sanad of the hadith in Ṣaḥīḥayn, and instead focuses the analysis on the matan, particularly in the context of strengthening its meaning and consistency with other thematic content. (Ilmi, Tangngareng, & Farhah, 2024) . Regarding the hadiths of *qiyām al-lail* that are not included in Ṣaḥīḥayn (al-Bukhārī and Muslim), researchers still analyse the sanad to ensure its validity up to the Prophet Muhammad. If the chain of transmission is deemed weak, the degree of weakness is investigated by considering the profile of the narrators through the principles of *al-jarḥ wa al-ta‘dīl*. Additionally, the text of the hadith is analysed to test its consistency with the Qur'an, other authentic hadiths, rationality, and historical facts. (Al-Munawar, 2020).

This study focuses on five main hadiths; four of them are found in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, or both, while one hadith—namely, about enlivening the night

by reading the Qur'an—is not found in *Ṣaḥīḥayn*. This hadith is only found in Musnad Ahmad and *Sunan al-Dārimī*. Therefore, researchers traced its chain of transmission to assess its authenticity. The chain of transmission examined originates from the narration of Ahmad bin Hanbal through the following chain: al-Rabīʿ bin Nāfiʿ → al-Haytham bin Ḥumayd → Zayd bin Wāqid → Sulaimān bin Mūsā → Kathīr bin Murrah → Tamīm bin Aws. Analysis of this chain is crucial in determining whether the narration is authentic up to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) or not.

Based on the results of research on the seven narrators in the chain of transmission of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal to Tamim al-Dari, it can be concluded that the chain of transmission is *ṣaḥīḥ*. This is based on two main reasons: first, the continuity (*ittiṣāl*) between each narrator at all levels of the chain of transmission; second, all narrators are considered to meet the criteria of *ʿadālah* and *ḍabt*, with a good reputation according to the scholars of *jarḥ wa taʿdīl*, although Sulaimān bin Mūsā was once considered *ḍaʿīf* due to mistakes made in his old age.

Thus, the chain of transmission of the hadith about spending the night reading the Qur'an can be categorised as authentic. This confirmation completes the authenticity of the entire chain of transmission of the hadith *qiyām al-lail*, and with that, research can proceed to a more in-depth analysis of the matn.

2) Quality of Matan

Research on hadith texts generally focuses on two main aspects, namely the possibility of *shudhūdh* (contradictions in content) and *illah* (hidden flaws in the text). (Ilmi et al., 2024) . To identify these two aspects, a methodological approach comprising three stages was used. First, it was ensured that the hadiths studied were truly sourced from the Prophet Muhammad through validation of the quality of the sanad. Since all of the sanad in this study have been proven to be *sahih*, the study could proceed to the analysis of the matn. (Akbari, Hudaya, & Munawwarah, 2025) .

Second, examine the editorial structure between similar accounts, paying attention to the possibility of omissions, additions, insertions, editorial changes, or the incorporation of sentences from outside the original text. These elements do not necessarily weaken the hadith, unless they are proven to distort the substance of its meaning. (Fikri & Hasanah, 2023) Third, evaluating the content of the matan through comparison with the Qur'an, other authentic hadiths, rationality, and historical facts. If the matan is consistent with these sources, it is considered authentic or even strong. Conversely, if it contradicts them significantly, the matan is considered weak. (Akbari et al., 2025) .

As a first step, the researchers divided each text into sections to identify the wording that most closely resembled the words of the Prophet, then compared them with other texts to detect the presence of *'illah*. After that, a broader analysis was conducted on the content of the text in relation to the principles of Islamic texts and historical rationality. After comparing the hadith texts, the researcher concluded that the hadiths about *qiyām al-lail* do not contain any *'illah* that invalidate their authenticity. Although there are differences in wording in the form of taghyīr (redaction), *idrāj* (insertion outside the text), and *nuqṣān* (omission), these variations do not affect the substantial meaning of the hadith. Furthermore, there are no indications of *shudhūd* in these narrations, and the content of the matn aligns with the Qur'an, other authentic hadiths, historical facts, and principles of rationality.

Based on the reviews of the hadiths about *qiyām al-lail* above, these hadiths are, as a whole, authentic, both in terms of their chain of transmission and their text, and can therefore be used as *hujjah* / guidance in performing acts of worship.

Textual, intertextual, and contextual interpretations of Qiyām al-Lail

The concept of *qiyām al-lail* has been narrowly understood as the practice of night prayer. This understanding, although justified by a number of authentic accounts, does not represent the complexity of meaning contained in the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad (Taswin, 2021). However, in the context of the study of *ma'ānī al-ḥadīth*, a hadith text contains the possibility of expanding its meaning beyond its literal interpretation, provided that this is done through an analytical approach to semantics, intertextual relationships, and the social reality in which the hadith was conveyed. Therefore, reinterpreting the meaning of *qiyām al-lail* is important to align the moral message of the hadith with the challenges of contemporary life (Zulfarizal, 2020).

Etymologically, *qiyām* comes from the Arabic word “qāma–yaqūmu” which means to stand, rise, or stay awake, while *lail* means night, so *qiyām al-lail* literally means “standing at night” or “keeping the night alive.” (Ida Ilhafah & Fairuzah, 2022) In many hadiths, the expression *qiyām al-lail* is used idiomatically to refer to night prayer. (Mujiburrohman, 2014) However, idioms in Arabic, as in other languages, do not always have rigid semantic boundaries. The term *qiyām*, for example, in many verses of the Qur'an does not always mean literally standing, but can also mean steadfastness, readiness, and determination in carrying out Allah's commands. For example, in QS. Āli ‘Imrān: 191: Those who remember Allah standing, sitting, and lying down... In this verse, the word *qiyāman* is paired with *qu'ūdan* and *junūban*, indicating continuity of worship in various positions, not merely standing..

The same applies to hadith. One of the hadiths that is often used as textual basis for night prayer is:

أَفْضَلُ الصَّلَاةِ بَعْدَ الْمَكْتُوبَةِ صَلَاةُ اللَّيْلِ...

The best prayer after the obligatory prayers is the night prayer(Sunnah.com, n.d.)

The text of this hadith explicitly mentions night prayer as a superior form of worship. However, this hadith only describes one manifestation of *qiyām al-lail*, namely in the form of prayer. A textual approach does indeed lead to the conclusion that *qiyām al-lail* is synonymous with night prayer. However, the *ma'ānī al-ḥadīth* approach requires researchers to explore the meaning by considering the editorial structure, social context, and continuity between one hadith and another.

The examination of hadiths in the *kutub al-tis'ah* and *syarḥ-syarḥ* hadiths indicates that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) did not only use the night for prayer. In a hadith narrated by Imam Bukhārī, the Prophet (peace be upon him) began his night by spending time with his family, educating them with moral values and wisdom, then sleeping, and after that waking up for tahajud prayer (N. Khotimah et al., 2024)At other times, the Prophet spent his evenings in consultation with his companions, receiving guests, or comforting anxious Muslims. In certain contexts, the Prophet even carried out state affairs at night, such as devising war strategies or resolving conflicts among the community(Majid, 2020).

A hadith narrated by Imam Tirmidhi from Abdullah ibn Salam, for example, describes three excellent deeds that will lead a person to paradise:

... وَأَطْعَمُوا الطَّعَامَ، وَصَلُّوا الْأَرْحَامَ، وَصَلُّوا بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّاسُ نِيَامٌ، تَدْخُلُوا الْجَنَّةَ بِسَلَامٍ

Feed the hungry, maintain ties of kinship, and pray at night when people are asleep, and you will surely enter Paradise in safety(Sunnah.com, n.d.)

This hadith is very important because it links *ṣalāt al-lail* with other social activities, namely feeding others and maintaining family ties(Solikin, 2024)The phrase *وَصَلُّوا بِاللَّيْلِ وَالنَّاسُ نِيَامٌ* is placed after social activities as a form of balance between individual worship and social contribution. Moreover, the structure of this hadith indicates that nighttime is a strategic time to perform acts that have both spiritual and social impact(Permana, 2024)This indicates that *qiyām al-lail* is not limited to ritualistic activities alone.

From a linguistic perspective, the term *qiyām al-lail* can have a broad meaning, referring to all forms of worship performed at night with the intention of drawing closer to Allah. This is in line with the opinion contained in *al-Mawsū'ah al-Fiqhiyyah al-Kuwaitiyyah*:

الْقِيَامُ اللَّيْلُ هُوَ صَلَاةٌ، وَتِلَاوَةٌ، وَذِكْرٌ، وَدُعَاءٌ، وَاسْتِغْفَارٌ، وَسَائِرُ عِبَادَاتِ اللَّيْلِ.

“*Qiyām al-lail* adalah salat, membaca al-Qur’an, zikir, doa, istighfar, dan semua bentuk ibadah malam lainnya.” (Al-Islāmiyyah, n.d.)

This editorial not only broadens the scope of the meaning of *qiyām al-lail*, but also opens up room for interpretation that night worship does not have to be in a formal form such as prayer, but can take the form of other spiritual activities in accordance with *maqāṣid al-syarī’ah*.

From the perspective of intertextuality, the exclusive meaning of *qiyām al-lail* as night prayer can be expanded when linked to other hadiths that indicate forms of worship at night. For example, there is a hadith about the Prophet waking up at night (Magfirah, 2020) to check on his companions or help his family with domestic chores. In another account, the Prophet instructed his companions to keep watch at night for the safety of the camp, a form of night service intended as *fī sabīlillāh*.

The same can be found in contemporary examples: a medical worker who stays up all night in the emergency room to save lives, a father who cares for his sick child all night with sincerity, or a teacher who prepares lesson materials late into the night for the sake of his students' education. All of these activities, if done for the sake of Allah, are essentially modern forms of *qiyām al-lail* oriented towards service and devotion.

Sementara itu, pendekatan kontekstual memberikan landasan epistemologis bagi reinterpretasi ini. Pada masa Nabi, struktur sosial masyarakat lebih bersifat agraris dan komunal. Malam hari identik dengan ketenangan dan ibadah karena siang hari penuh dengan aktivitas fisik (Huda, 2015). Dalam masyarakat kontemporer, struktur waktu telah bergeser. Malam tidak selalu menjadi waktu hening, melainkan juga waktu produktif. Kota-kota modern tidak pernah tidur. Malam hari bisa jadi adalah satu-satunya waktu yang memungkinkan sebagian orang beribadah atau memberi manfaat kepada orang lain (Wahyuningsih & Safitri, 2020). Oleh karena itu, mendefinisikan *qiyām al-lail* hanya dalam bentuk salat akan menafikan dimensi spiritualitas malam yang dialami oleh kelompok-kelompok tertentu dalam masyarakat modern. Dari sini, maka dapat dibangun dua kategori makna *qiyām al-lail* berdasarkan pendekatan *ma’ānī al-ḥadīth*:

This refers to night prayers, including tahajjud, witir, and other sunnah prayers performed after sleep. This is the most common form and is explicitly taught in normative hadiths.

Covering all acts of worship and good deeds performed at night, including reciting prayers, reading the Qur'an, teaching, staying awake for social duties, or other charitable activities intended as acts of worship.

This second model of meaning is what we want to highlight in this reinterpretation as a response to the challenges of modern life. Not everyone is able to perform night prayers due to health conditions, night work, or family responsibilities. However, they can still perform *qiyām al-lail* in other forms that are appropriate to their abilities and circumstances (Mahmudin, 2018).

In this context, it is important to emphasise that reinterpreting the meaning of *qiyām al-lail* is not a form of liberalisation of religious teachings, but rather an effort to preserve the spirit and essence of worship within the framework of *maqāṣid al-syarīʿah*. The aim is to make worship easier for the faithful without losing its spiritual depth. This is in line with the fiqh principle: *al-masyaqqah tajlib al-taysīr* (difficulty demands ease).

Reinterpretasi Makna Qiyām al-Lail

The reinterpretation of the meaning of *qiyām al-lail* is a response to the tendency of reductionism in understanding night worship, which has been narrowed down to one form of ritual worship: *tahajjud* prayer. This understanding has become mainstream in classical and contemporary Islamic literature, including in Sufi teachings, jurisprudence of worship, and daily preaching, which emphasise that night prayer is the primary symbol of spiritual piety (Mujiburrohman, 2014).

The popular hadiths of the Prophet (peace be upon him) such as: “The most virtuous prayer after the obligatory prayers is the night prayer” (HR. Muslim, no. 1163) or “Spread the greeting of peace, feed the poor, maintain family ties, and pray at night when people are asleep, then you will enter Paradise in safety” (HR. al-Tirmidzi, no. 2485) reinforce this view.

However, an understanding that relies solely on the *zāhir* (textual) layer of the hadith is insufficient to grasp the breadth of meaning that may be contained in the Prophet's words (Rizqi, Deski, & Ikhwan, 2023). The approach of *maʿānī al-ḥadīth* which examines the deeper meanings, linguistic structure, intertextual relationships, and social context of hadith is an effective critical tool for re-examining the meaning of *qiyām al-lail* within a more comprehensive and inclusive framework (Ramle & Huda, 2022).

Semantically, the term *qiyām al-lail* is formed from the verb *qāma-yaqūmu* (to rise, to stand, to actively do something) and the noun *lail* (night). Thus, *qiyām al-lail* literally means “standing at night” or “reviving the night” (Ida Ilhafah & Fairuzah, 2022). However, semantically and contextually, it can encompass all forms of conscious activities and worship performed at night with a spiritual orientation towards Allah SWT.

In this sense, night prayer is a form of *qiyām al-lail*, but not the only one. In the *al-Mawsūʿah al-Fiqhiyyah al-Kuwaitiyyah*, it is mentioned that *qiyām al-lail* is any form of worship performed at night, such as prayer, remembrance of Allah, recitation of the Qurʿan, supplication, and other forms of *taqarrub* to Allah (Al-Islāmiyyah, n.d.) This explanation opens a theoretical space in which activities other than prayer can be categorised as *qiyām al-lail* if they contain valid religious and spiritual value.

Research into the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad in the Kutub al-Tis'ah shows that the Messenger of Allah did not only spend his nights in *tahajjud* prayers. In

authentic accounts, it is mentioned that he would converse with Aisha after the *Isha* prayer, talking about life, spirituality, and sometimes joking to strengthen emotional ties within the family (Mohamad Nor, Nabilah Yusoff, Fakhrol Razi, & Sanusi, 2018).

In another context, the Prophet consulted with his companions on the eve of the Battle of Badr; he devised strategies, provided spiritual motivation, and engaged in remembrance of God at the same time (Tok, 2020). Other hadiths describe that the Prophet SAW engaged in teaching activities, reciting revelations, teaching his companions privately at night, and even serving the people (Lestari, Fitriyadi, & Sahbana, 2024).

All these activities, although they do not explicitly mention the term *qiyām al-lail*, reflect an intense and multidimensional spiritual practice at night. In this context, *qiyām al-lail* reflects more than just night prayer; it is a construct of night worship that encompasses educational, contemplative, and social work.

In one narration, Abu Hurairah ra. divided his night into three parts: one third for sleep, one third for prayer, and one third for studying the hadith of the Prophet (HR. al-Dārimī). This division emphasises that seeking religious knowledge at night is also a form of *qiyām al-lail* (Suhartini, 2016). Even scientific writing, compiling books, or thinking about solutions for the community, if done at night with sincere intentions for Allah, can also be categorised as *qiyām al-lail* (Parhan, Syahidin, Somad, Abdulah, & Nugraha, 2024).

Therefore, it is not surprising that earlier scholars such as Imam al-Shafi'i, Imam Nawawi, and al-Ghazali wrote many of their major works at night, because they understood the essence of *qiyām al-lail* not only as prayer, but as all spiritual activities during the quiet night.

This broader interpretation is highly relevant in the social context of Muslims today. In the modern world, which demands 24-hour work, nighttime is no longer synonymous with sleep or spiritual solitude (Costa & Garbarino, 2014). In fact, for some professions, night is the main working time: healthcare workers are on duty in emergency rooms, security officers guard the environment from crime, Quran memorisation teachers train children to memorise the Quran, and humanitarian volunteers care for disaster victims in the middle of the night (Ali, Surya Siregar, Nuraeni Muhtar, & Aridhayandi, 2018).

If the concept of *qiyām al-lail* is limited to night prayers, then their acts of worship and sacrifice lose their place in the spiritual landscape of Islam. In sociological and anthropological approaches, religious practices are reflections of religious culture that are bound to social structures and community dynamics.

Therefore, social activities carried out at night, if they are intended for Allah and contribute to the public good, cannot be separated from the value of *ta'abbud* (submission to Allah). In fact, from the perspective of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*, such acts clearly support the protection of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), honour (*ḥifẓ al-'ird*), and social

order (*ḥifẓ al-māl wa al-dīn*), which are all at the core of the objectives of the Shari'ah (Sholikhah, Wang, & Li, 2019; Koburtay et al., 2022).

The theological approach to *qiyām al-lail* must also be oriented towards values of benefit and social orientation. When someone stays awake at night to care for patients, protect the community, or educate the people, and this activity is carried out out of religious awareness, then this activity has the same spiritual status as, or even greater than, night prayers performed without a spirit of social benefit.

The Prophet's hadith, "The best among you are those who are most beneficial to others" (HR. Ahmad) reinforces this principle. Thus, a reinterpretive understanding of *qiyām al-lail* encompasses socially oriented religious work that is considered worship, as exemplified by the Prophet through his service to the community during the night (Ida Ilhafah & Fairuzah, 2022).

Therefore, two main classifications need to be established in understanding *qiyām al-lail*:

Ritual-spiritual meaning, namely *qiyām* in the form of night prayers such as *tahajjud*, *witir*, or *tarawih*.

Social-spiritual meaning, which encompasses all acts of goodness performed at night, such as reciting *zikir*, reading the Quran, seeking knowledge, staying awake at night in service to the community, and other acts of service performed with the intention of pleasing Allah (Suniyah, 2017).

This classification is not intended to obscure the religious meaning of night prayers, but rather to emphasise that Islam does not negate the social contribution of the night as part of the manifestation of worship.

This reinterpretation is not based solely on rational arguments or modernist speculation but is firmly rooted in the legacy of the Prophet's hadith, the practices of his companions, and valid linguistic and contextual interpretations. This *ma'ānī al-ḥadīth* approach has shown that the hadiths about *qiyām al-lail* are plural, sourced from various social conditions, and reflect the extraordinary flexibility of worship in Islam.

Hadiths are not only read from the perspective of sanad and matan, but also from their context (*asbāb al-wurūd*), functional value, and relevance to reality. Thus, this reinterpretation is a synthesis between the normative-theological approach and the sociological-anthropological approach, which aims to re-ground the concept of *qiyām al-lail* in the social reality of Muslims.

Islam, as a religion of mercy, is not present to burden the community with formalistic rituals, but rather to guide every act of the community towards Allah SWT through various forms of legitimate, beneficial, and sincerely intended devotion.

Therefore, this reinterpretation of *qiyām al-lail* not only broadens the scope of the meaning of night worship but also reaffirms the principle of inclusivity in Islamic teachings. Islam does not limit spirituality to prayer mats and *rakaat* but also values the sweat and sacrifice that arise from sincerity and social responsibility.

This is the universal message of the Prophet's saying, that rising at night is not merely standing in prayer, but also the awakening of consciousness, concern, and devotion to Allah through service to others. With this understanding, Islam appears not as an exclusive ritualistic religion, but as a transformative religion that values all forms of worship whether performed in the mosque or during society—as long as they are intended as *qurbah* to Allah.

Integration of Fiqh Values and Spirituality in Contemporary Qiyām al-Lail

The expansion of the meaning of *qiyām al-lail* in the modern social context has significant fiqh and spiritual implications, particularly in relation to the recognition of the value of collective and social worship. When professional activities carried out at night—such as caring for patients, maintaining security, or handling emergencies—are recognised as forms of participation in nightly worship, the traditional fiqh paradigm, which tends to restrict *qiyām al-lail* to individual night prayers, needs to be re-examined (Sus Shalawati & Ainur Rofiq Sofa, 2024).

This shift marks a transition from an exclusive understanding of *maḥḍah* worship to the recognition of social action as part of spiritually charged worship. From the perspective of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, the value of an act is not measured solely by its outward form, but is determined by the intention (*niyyah*), purpose (*ghāyah*), and benefit (*maṣlaḥah*) it contains. Thus, social activities carried out at night to protect life, preserve dignity, or meet urgent community needs can be categorised as *qurbah*—that is, drawing closer to Allah (Kayadibi, 2019).

A medical worker on duty in the emergency room, or a volunteer evacuating disaster victims in the middle of the night, is actually performing another form of *qiyām al-lail*, even though they are not standing in prayer. Their worship is social in nature, but its essence remains spiritual. The spiritual implications of this perspective are profound. It emphasises that piety is not only built in ritual spaces, but also in real social responsibility.

Islam does not recognise a dichotomy between individual and social worship; the two reinforce each other. Therefore, collective night-time practices such as neighbourhood watch, community policy discussions, or teaching knowledge when performed with the intention of worship and the principle of *iḥsān* can contain spiritual value equivalent to night prayers (Falah, 2016). Within this framework, *qiyām al-lail* not only enlivens the night on a personal level, but also illuminates social life with a spirit of devotion.

However, to legitimise this expansion of meaning scientifically, a methodological synthesis between textual meaning (*ma'nā naṣṣī*) and actual meaning (*ma'nā waqā'i*) is required. This synthetic approach is crucial in responding to two extremes: first, the scriptural-literal approach that freezes the text within its historical framework; and second, the liberal-relativistic approach that detaches meaning from its normative

roots.

Many normative hadiths emphasise *qiyām al-lail* in the form of night prayer as a highly recommended act of worship (Afriani & Wijaya, 2021). However, if this understanding is applied exclusively without considering social dynamics and the context of the community, it can narrow the inclusive spiritual horizon of Islam.

The relevance of actual meaning is important, especially when Muslims today find themselves in a complex and diverse social landscape. Night-time professions such as paramedics, security officers, journalists, and humanitarian volunteers play a vital role that cannot be ignored. In this context, *qiyām al-lail* needs to be reinterpreted as a concept of night worship that encompasses prayer, recitation of the Qur'an, remembrance of Allah, consultation, teaching, and social service provided that all these activities are intended as acts of devotion to Allah (Hailal, Latipah, & Nuroh, 2024).

This reinterpretation process does not negate the text of the hadith, but rather re-reads its meaning through the approach of *ma'ānī al-ḥadīth*, which is a method of interpretation that explores the meaning, intention, and *maqāṣid* behind the text. For example, when the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) discussed matters with his companions at night or conversed with his wife about faith and life, these activities were not classified as prayer, yet they still represented spiritual depth and the practice of night-time devotion.

In other words, the spiritual value of *qiyām al-lail* does not lie solely in the form of prayer, but in the spirit of devotion that underlies it (N. Khotimah et al., 2024). Thus, the synthesis between textual and actual meanings is an academic effort to maintain continuity between classical scientific knowledge and contemporary social reality, so that texts remain alive and contextual, and reality remains normatively oriented.

Within this framework, *qiyām al-lail* is no longer understood as a static concept limited to night-time rituals, but as a dynamic spiritual horizon. It can be realised in the form of prayer, recitation, remembrance, social service, scientific discussion, or even collective strategies for the benefit of the community as long as all are carried out with sincere intentions and a spirit of servitude.

3. Conclusion

Based on the results of exploration, *takhrīj*, and analysis of the hadiths about *qiyām al-lail*, this study confirms that the quality of the sanad and matan of these hadiths are generally authentic and authoritative. The majority of the hadiths are sourced from the books *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *Musnad Aḥmad*, and *Sunan al-Dārimī*, and have been systematically tested through sanad and matan criticism to assess their validity, continuity, and substance. No *'illah* or *shudhūdh* were found in the analysis of the hadith, despite variations in wording. This reinforces that the content of the hadith about *qiyām al-lail* can be used as evidence in understanding the

concept of night worship. The search for meaning using the *ma'ānī al-ḥadīth* approach shows that *qiyām al-lail* does not only refer to the practice of night prayers such as tahajud or witir, but also includes various night activities that are spiritual, educational, and social in nature, as long as they are done with the intention of getting closer to Allah SWT.

This reinterpretation is a scholarly response to the reductionist tendency in interpreting night worship, which has been dominated by ritualistic understanding. Semantic, intertextual, and contextual approaches have successfully illustrated that the meaning of *qiyām al-lail* encompasses two major dimensions: first, the ritual-spiritual meaning in the form of night prayer; and second, the social-spiritual meaning in the form of all acts of virtue at night, such as zikir, reading the Qur'an, teaching, staying awake for the benefit of the community, and even professional activities with an orientation towards worship. With this inclusive interpretation, Islam is presented as a religion that embraces both individual and collective piety, and places social service on an equal footing with ritual worship. Therefore, reinterpreting the meaning of *qiyām al-lail* through the perspective of *ma'ānī al-ḥadīth* is not merely an expansion of scholarly discourse, but also a transformative offer in actualising a contextual, applicable spirituality of the night that is in harmony with the principles of maqāṣid al-syarī'ah.

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